

North Carolina and FEMA will be providing mobile homes and park model manufactured housing in select counties where it is the only option for temporary housing for survivors of the April 16 tornadoes. Counties are selected if the demand for rental housing outstrips the supply of available rental houses and apartments.

There are nearly 1,000 homes in the 18 disaster-declared counties that do not have insurance coverage and were heavily damaged or destroyed.

Six of the counties with the greatest losses – Bertie, Bladen, Harnett, Hertford, Lee and Sampson – have a limited inventory of rental homes and apartments. The more populous counties among the 18 declared counties, such as Wake and Cumberland, have a wide variety of rental housing options.

Direct housing is the option of last resort. Disaster survivors, even those who lived in mobile homes before the tornadoes, will not be housed in FEMA provided units if other options for temporary housing are available.

In a telephone survey of applicants in Bertie, Bladen, Harnett, Hertford, Lee and Sampson, 41 percent of respondents said they have an immediate housing need that can't be met in the local rental housing market.

The furnished housing units include three-bedroom, one-bathroom mobile homes up to 70 feet long and two-bedroom, one-bathroom manufactured homes up to 40 feet long.

The units will be set up on the applicant's property if access to utilities and local zoning regulations make it possible. This is the preferred option. If a mobile home or park model can't be set up on the applicant's lot, it will be set up on an existing pad in a private, commercial mobile home park.

The units will be delivered and set-up by SRS, a North Carolina-based contractor with facilities in Greensboro and Fayetteville.

Some disaster survivors in Bertie County – one of the hardest hit communities – could move into the temporary housing as early as Friday, May 6.

The mobile homes and park models are temporary housing. Disaster survivors live in the mobile homes and park models while they work to find permanent housing. Those living in the units have their case reviewed each month for continued FEMA assistance. They can live in the units for a maximum of 18 months.

Mobile homes and park model manufactured housing bought by FEMA meet strict specifications for indoor air quality.

Park models and mobile homes are designed and constructed with a superior grade quality of workmanship and meet, or exceed, federal Manufactured Housing Construction and Safety Standards. Each unit is equipped with a NOAA weather radio.